

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1769

S E C R E T SEOUL 5281

NODIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS NEW DELHI FOR AMBASSADOR ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR KS KN VM

SUBJ: POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH ON RELEASE OF ROK DIPLOMATS HELD BY  
HANOI

1. DURING MY FAREWELL CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER AFTERNOON OF JUNE 20, HE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF ME ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE RELEASE OF THREE ROK DIPLOMATS HELD BY HANOI SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON. HE SAID THAT THE ROK HAD BEEN TALKING WITH HANOI THROUGH THE FRENCH. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO HANOI REPLIED, AGAIN THROUGH THE FRENCH, THAT FOLLOWING TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO EXCHANGE THE THREE DIPLOMATS FOR NORTH KOREAN AGENTS CURRENTLY IN PRISON IN ROK. THE ROKG HAD RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT IT WOULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER SUCH A PROPOSAL.

2. ON JUNE 16 THE ROK HAD RECEIVED A WRITTEN AND DETAILED PROPOSAL FROM HANOI. THE PROPOSAL SAID THAT BY JUNE 23 THEY WISHED TO HAVE A LIST OF NORTH KOREAN DETAINEES (REFERRED TO AS "PATRIOTIC COMRADES") HELD BY THE ROK. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THAT LIST, ON JUNE 27 AT 10 A.M. AT THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI THEY WISH TO HAVE A STAFF LEVEL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF A FORMAL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SEOUL 05281 201008Z

MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE SAME LOCATION AT 10 A.M. ON JULY 5. FOR THE STAFF MEETING ON JUNE 27 THEY WISH NO MORE THAN TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE THREE PARTIES INVOLVED, A TOTAL OF SIX PARTICIPANTS. AT THE MAIN MEETING ON JULY 5 THEY WISH NO MORE THAN FOUR REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE THREE PARTICIPANTS AND THAT THE DELEGATIONS BE HEADED BY A SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF

VICE MINISTERIAL RANK.

3. I ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER HOW THE LIST WOULD BE TRANSMITTED AND HOW MANY DETAINEES WERE CURRENTLY BEING HELD. HE SAID THAT THE LIST WOULD BE SENT THROUGH THE FRENCH AND THAT CURRENTLY THERE WERE EIGHT AGENTS IN PRISON IN THE ROK. THE INITIAL LIST WHICH THE ROK WILL PROVIDE WOULD CONTAIN THE NAMES OF THREE OF THESE. THE ROK WAS SURE THAT THE NORTH WOULD NOT SETTLE FOR A LESS THAN TWO-FOR-ONE SWAP AND WAS PREPARED, IF PRESSED, TO PROVIDE THREE ADDITIONAL NAMES.

4. IN AN INTERESTING ASIDE THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL RECEIVED THE MORNING OF JUNE 16 HAD DESIGNATED THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN RANGOON AS THE SITE FOR ALL TALKS. HOWEVER, ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE SAME DAY THEY RECEIVED WORD THAT THE SITE HAD BEEN CHANGED TO NEW DELHI BECAUSE THE NORTH WAS RELUCTANT TO HOLD THE MEETINGS IN RANGOON. HE ADDED THAT THE ROK WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A SITE SELECTED BY EITHER THE FRENCH OR THE INDIANS, BUT ACCEPTED THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL WITHOUT QUIBBLING AND WERE NOW MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEETING. HE ADDED THAT WHEN THE MEETINGS TAKE PLACE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ROK REPRESENTATIVES MAY CALL UPON U.S. EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI FOR SOME ASSISTANCE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SEOUL 05281 201008Z

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED IF WE HAD ANY VIEWS AS TO WHY THE VIETNAMESE HAD GONE THROUGH THIS ELABORATE PROCEDURE OF FIRST A LIST, THEN A STAFF MEETING, THEN A FULL MEETING. THE ROKG WOULD PREFER JUST ONE MEETING AND AN EXCHANGE BUT WAS AMENABLE TO THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT OUR EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN THE SAME, THAWSTHE VIETNAMESE ARE VERY PRECISE AND MOST USUALLY MOVE FROM EXCHANGE OF DOCUMENTS TO STAFF LEVEL DISCUSSIONS TO FORMAL MEETINGS.

6. IN CONCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT, WHILE THE ROKG WOULD HAVE LIKED SOME CHANGES IN THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL, THEIR MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO HAVE THEIR PEOPLE BACK AND AS A RESULT THEY HAD ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL IN TOTO MAKING NO REQUEST FOR CHANGE BUT ONLY NOTING SOME MINOR MODIFICATIONS THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED.  
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## Message Attributes

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